

Historical Society of Palm Desert

P. O. Box 77, Palm Desert, CA 92261 NEWSLETTER. April 1982

4-82



MARK YOUR CALENDAR. . . . NOW!!!

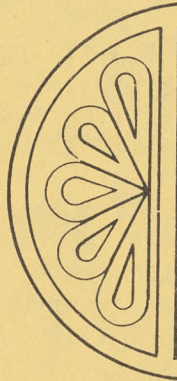
Saturday, May 15th, Noon
SHADOW MOUNTAIN CLUB

Founders Day Luncheon honoring
Mr. Cliff Henderson, sponsored by
your Historical Society.

\$10.00 per person. No host cocktails.

Watch the newspapers for future
announcements on this event.

This is the first-ever Founders Day
event for Palm Desert, and we antici-
pate a huge turnout. Get your reser-
vations in early.



Wednesday, June 9th, Noon
Location to be selected soon.

Luncheon....Honoring Historian of
the year...Mrs. Nina Paul Shumway.

We have just been advised by the
County Historical Commission that
our Society's nomination of Mrs.
Shumway has been selected, and the
County Historical Commission will
meet on June 9th to present this
award here in the desert. So, your
Commission is working on a site for
this luncheon, and will advise you
of the particulars soon.



The Third Annual Dinner held at the Palm Desert Resort Country Club was a huge success. We on the Commission would like to make these events more than just a once-a-year affair. Events like this brings the membership together, with wonderful exposure to invited guests, whereby all contribute to the input of History to this Society. From our membership we receive fresh ideas, helpful criticism and interest. We are now seeking those who have an interest in planning of such events. It is no small undertaking. Up to now, your Commission has had the full responsibility of such planning. For those of you who were at the Dinner, and so enjoyed the slide/tape show, as also the film of Andy the Donkeyman, you now understand the logistics of presenting these shows. We need someone who has an interest and knowledge of projectors/film etc...who can do the necessary set-up and showing of these films. We do plan to add to this program, using material now available in our office, to expand the Historical slide/tape show...presenting others who have pioneered this Valley in the Cove Communities. If you have an interest in either helping with the planning of future events...or with the presentation of the film and slide/tape shows, please get in touch with us at this office.

The Historic exhibit is now at the Palm Springs Library and will remain there until the end of April. In May we hope to find a permanent display area for this exhibit during the Summer months. It would be of great help if there would also be some volunteers from among our membership who would donate their time in helping in the moving of this exhibit. It takes approximately three hours of volunteer time.



A big thank you . . . Many of you have automatically sent in your dues checks. For those who have not, enclosed is a form which you may complete and enclose with a check for your 1982-83 dues.

This is the second in our series of featuring a pioneer who was taped by Mrs Patricia Young for her oral history project. The following are excerpts from the tape made with Mr. Philip Boyd. The conversation begins where Mr Boyd has purchased his property here in Palm Desert, facing Portola, which is now a part of the Vintage Country Club.

"For the next few years, Mrs Boyd, and I came down regularly just to enjoy the sight. We'd go up on the butte, where we had built a barbecue arrangement. An Architect from Palm Springs by the name of Albret Frey designed it with large cement blocks all around. This was a very pleasant place to sit, particularly in the evenings. In those days you couldn't see any lights in the area at all after dark. There were no buildings, no homes. We were really alone in this part of the desert. I learned to love this experience, and as a result we entertained guests frequently, having late afternoon picnics, sitting up on the butte watching the stars come out or the moon come up. At times, there would be little rodents scurrying around that we would feed. The desert seemed to us to be an extremely attractive place.

We did have one experience that we hadn't anticipated. We had planned to come down to the butte one day to entertain a bride and groom, along with about fifteen other guests, and took an early start so that we might have the fire going and the food ready. This was 1942 or 1943. At any rate, as we approached the little dirt road that went to the picnic site, we were stopped by a sergeant in uniform who said "You can't come in here " "Well", I said, "this is my ranch. Why do you stop me?" The answer ~~was~~ that the army had taken over the property. As you have probably learned, this was most likely for General Patton's group who were training men and were seeking a site for various maneuvers, and in particular places where they might hide equipment from aerial surveys, and later on for repair of military equipment. I was pretty annoyed because I said "Well, nobody told me that they were taking my property" The sergeant replied, "Well, I don't know anything about this. I was told not to let anyone on the property." This was followed by my statement that "We have guests coming, and I'm going over on the butte. Who is your superior officer ?" He said that Major so-and-so would be there in about half an hour. "Well," I said, "you tell him to come up and see me. I'll be over on the butte, preparing for guests, and please let them come in"

"About half an hour later, along came a jeep with the Major in it. He came strutting up the hill where we were, and was rather severe. I explained the situation to him. He said, "Wasn't this land leased from you?" I answered that I had not talked to anyone about it, military or otherwise. "Well", he said, "there's some mistake then." I asked, "Won't you sit down with us?" He was lonely and away from home, and so, he spent the evening with us. When the guests arrived we had a nice picnic. Afterward the Major said, "We'll send somebody to you in the next few days to straighten this out." That was the beginning of a lease in which the Army occupied the full area that we owned for at least the next two years. I think that there were as many as fifteen hundred or two thousand soldiers there in tents and various structures at that time. They drilled wells all over the place and found plenty of water. I thought that I was going to have a lot of water supply when they left, but they took all the casings out as there was a shortage of steel. They were preparing to go over to Africa, to be in the campaign against Rommel. And so, they left and I didn't get the land back until late in 1944 or early 1945. This was the first experience that I had here and had learned to like it. With that interruption, I wanted to come back as soon as I could."

